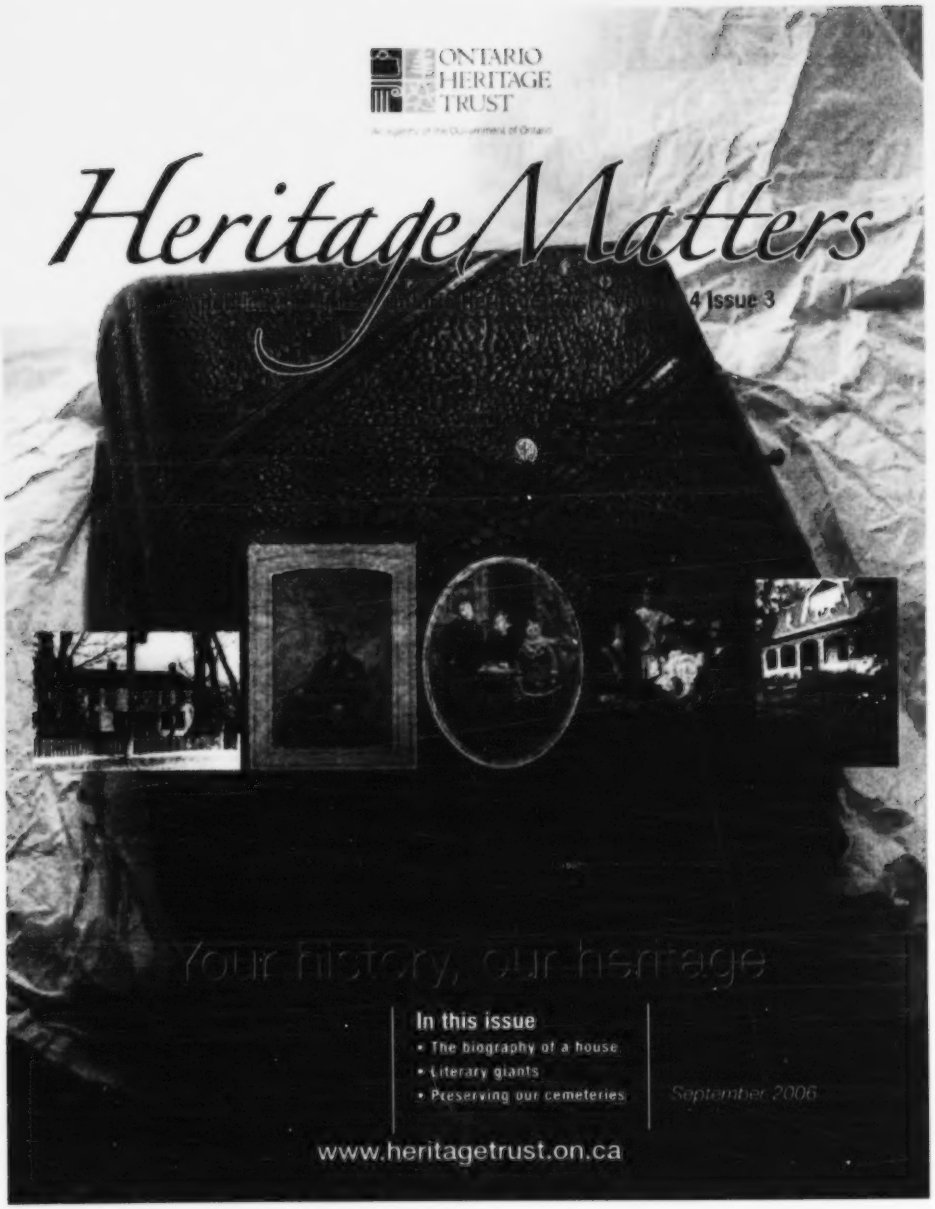
ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST
Heritage Matters
4 Issue 3
Your history, our heritage
In this issue
• The biography of a house
• Literary giants
• Preserving our cemeteries
September 2006
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A message from The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman

Ontario's heritage tells the stories of the people, places and events that have shaped our province. At the Ontario Heritage Trust, we not only restore and preserve heritage properties, but we also delve into the lives of the people who lived at these sites, thereby giving these buildings greater meaning.

We each have a unique ancestry. For instance, my mother was from Jamaica and my father St. Vincent. They came to Canada – like so many others – seeking a future for their children in this great land. Through their perseverance and hard work, I was able to achieve goals they never dreamed of. I am proud of my heritage – both the Caribbean and the Canadian. It's wonderful to be able to trace these roots and pass that information along to my granddaughters. It is an inheritance to celebrate.

Similarly, here at the Ontario Heritage Trust, we research, investigate, prod and interpret our heritage sites in much the same way you investigate your personal family history. Together, we learn about our ancestors in a way that helps define who we are and where we are going. We strive to find meaning and learn how best to commemorate the past.

In this issue of *Heritage Matters*, we look at many Trust sites and activities that help explore this theme. Whether conveyed through period architecture and decor, historical artifacts or genealogical records, stories from the past give greater context to our current lives.

These stories are at the core of our heritage – helping us to understand the past, giving meaning to the present and imparting lessons for the future.

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Ontario

The biography of a house

If these walls could speak

By Erin Semande

Researching family history is a popular pastime for many who want to uncover their family's unique past and discover how they contributed to Ontario's growth, development and diversity.

Today, the Ashbridge Estate is widely known in Toronto's east end for its lush gardens. The Estate is owned and operated by the Ontario Heritage Trust, its extensive collection of artifacts and archaeological discoveries celebrate the evolution of the Ashbridge family.

Determining one's lineage can come from a variety of sources, including: personal records (photographs, letters and diaries); government documents (census records, assessment rolles and land grants); and oral interviews with family members.

The Ontario Heritage Trust holds such archival material in the collections that relate to Trust-owned properties. For example, the Jesse Ashbridge House – located at 1444 Queen Street East in Toronto – was home to one of the city's earliest families. Five generations of Ashbridges lived on the property continuously from 1796 to 1997. A donation agreement was made between the Trust (then the Ontario Heritage Foundation) and Ashbridge descendants, Dorothy Bullen and Elizabeth Burton, in 1972.

Dorothy continued to live in the house until her death in 1997, at which time the house and over 6,000 archival records spanning the family's 200-year history on the property were transferred to the Trust. Hundreds of hours have been spent cataloguing, preserving and researching these archival records – which include diaries, letters, account books and photographs. These items, along with oral interviews, tell the story of the five generations of Ashbridges who lived on the property.

Led by Sarah James Ashbridge, the family immigrated to York (now Toronto) in 1793 from Chester County, Pennsylvania. Sarah brought her two unmarried sons Jonathan and John, daughters Elizabeth Wilcot and Mary McClure and their husbands and children. The family spent the winter months at the French Fort Rouillé and staked a claim sometime in 1794 on land near what's known today as Ashbridge's Bay in the east end of the city.

After three years in Upper Canada, the Ashbridges became one of the first families awarded a land grant on lots east of the Don River by Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe. The area was sparsely settled, roads were poor and provisions in limited supply. Together, the family cleared land for farming, grew fruits and vegetables and built log homes for shelter. In 1809, Jonathan built a two-storey Georgian house to replace his log cabin. He married Hannah Bennett Barton the same year and they had seven children.

In 1854, Jonathan and Hannah's son Jesse – a farmer with a sizable income – commissioned well-known architect Joseph Sheard to design a brick home that still stands at 1444 Queen Street East. Jesse continued to live with his mother until he married Harriet Trainer in 1860. Time spent together in their new home, however, was short-lived. In 1863, Harriet died, along with their newborn baby, shortly after the birth. The following year, Jesse married his second wife, Elizabeth Rooney, and later had three sons – Jesse Jr., Alfred and Wellington. Jesse died in 1874 of tuberculosis, leaving Elizabeth a widow at age 31. With the help of her cousin, Elizabeth raised her three boys and continued to live in the home built by her husband until her death in 1919.

After his mother's death, Wellington moved his family, wife Mabel and daughters Dorothy and Betty, into the house. Wellington was a graduate from the University of Toronto and worked as a civil engineer, a job that took him out west for a number of years. The Trust holds hundreds of personal records documenting the lives of Wellington and Mabel, including love letters and family photographs, giving today's researcher a glimpse into their personal lives. In the early 1900s, Wellington began tracing his family's lineage. He travelled to Pennsylvania and photographed the homes of his ancestors and conducted research using archival material. In 1912, he published *The Ashbridge Book*, an invaluable resource documenting the family's history.

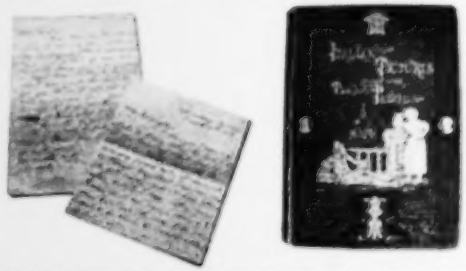
The fifth and final generation to live on the property was Wellington's two daughters, Betty and Dorothy. The sisters recounted their family history in a series of oral interviews in the summer of 1985, and provided significant information about their personal memories and stories of Ashbridges that came before them.

This collection celebrates the evolution of the Ashbridge family, from their struggles as early settlers to 20th-century urban dwellers. But it also shows how the Trust absorbs every element of a property it receives – from buildings and foundations to gardens and natural features to personal artifacts and collections. Using the Ashbridge collection, one can interpret a piece of Canada's history through the eyes of a family who witnessed vast change over 200 years.

Wellington and Mabel Ashbridge lived at the Toronto estate with their two daughters Dorothy and Betty. Dorothy continued to live in the house until her death in 1997.

Erin Semande is a Historic Places Initiative Researcher with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

In 2000, descendants of the Ashbridge family – from as far away as Pennsylvania – converged on Toronto's Ashbridge Estate for a family reunion.



The Ashbridge collection held by the Trust includes a large assortment of books, letters, photographs and other artifacts.

Wellington and Mabel Ashbridge are buried, along with other members of the Ashbridge family, in the Toronto Necropolis.

FEATURE STORY

LITERARY GIANTS

By Gordon Pim

Catharine Parr Traill is one of Canada's literary luminaries. Her life story spans most of the 19th century, crossing oceans, battling cholera and journeying through Ontario's backwoods. Yet, despite the struggles and hardships, she maintained a positive attitude to life in the new world and channelled those experiences into rich and popular chronicles. She was formally commemorated in 1958 when the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario (now the Ontario Heritage Trust) unveiled a provincial plaque in Lakefield at the site of the author's former home.

This 1958 provincial plaque unveiling to commemorate Catharine Parr Traill was attended by Mrs. Anne Atwood and Miss Anne Traill, the author's granddaughters. Also in attendance (shown here second from left) was the then-editor of the *Peterborough Examiner* – Robertson Davies – who, in time, became a literary giant in his own right.

Born in 1802 in Suffolk, England, Catharine Parr Strickland came from a literary family that claimed kinship with Edward III and Catharine Parr – the sixth wife of Henry VIII. Her sisters (including the distinguished Susanna Moodie) also wrote history texts, volumes of verse, short stories and several novels.

Catharine married retired Lieutenant Thomas Traill in 1832, whereafter they immediately left England for Upper Canada. After landing in Montreal, she was temporarily stricken by cholera that raged through the country at that time. After she recovered, they proceeded by steamer, wagon and foot to Katchewanooka Lake about 15 miles (24 km) north of Peterborough. Among the first settlers in the area, the Traills were not prepared for the hardships of the backwoods experience. After seven challenging years, they sold their farm. Fortunately, Traill's army half-pay and the money earned by Catharine from the short stories and sketches she sold to English and American magazines helped them remain solvent.

In 1846, the Traills bought a cleared farm on the south shore of Rice Lake. Here, at "Oaklands," they made their home until 1857 when their house and most of their belongings were destroyed by fire. Thomas Traill died shortly thereafter and Catharine spent the remainder of her life in Lakefield where she could be near members of her family. In 1862, her daughters purchased "Westove" in Lakefield where Catharine resided until her death in 1899 at the age of 97.

Catharine Parr Traill's literary and historical works have gained her a lasting reputation in Ontario and Canada. Her works are unusual in that they show the efforts of a person of superior education and refined upbringing who struggled with the same financial and physical difficulties experienced by all early settlers. Most immigrants of the time lacked the education to record these experiences, and those who did possess such skills usually lived in urban centres where they had little real knowledge of the pioneer existence. She was also able to convey her experiences with a genuine sense of humour.

As well, she was a gifted botanist and, in all her works, devoted considerable attention to native wildflowers and other plants. Her beautifully illustrated books, *Canadian Wild Flowers* (1868) and *Plant Life in Canada* (1885), remain outstanding resources to early Canadian botanical study.

Catharine Parr Traill remains one of Canada's – and Ontario's – early literary giants.

Gordon Pim is a Marketing and Communications Coordinator for the Ontario Heritage Trust.

FROM PERSON TO PLAQUE

By Wayne Kelly and Beth Anne Mendes

Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

Provincial plaques tell the stories of Ontario's past – the people, places and events that have shaped our province. But where do the ideas for provincial plaques come from?

Each year, the Ontario Heritage Trust receives applications from a variety of sources – community groups, heritage organizations, municipalities, individuals and others. The Trust's Board of Directors then reviews and considers each plaque application according to set criteria – provincial interest being the major criterion for assessment. Judgments about provincial interest are made within the context of a balanced and comprehensive view of Ontario's past.

What drives communities and people to commemorate our past with plaques is different from person to person. But regardless of the motivation, plaques continue to interpret and commemorate heritage sites. And the stories are bountiful.

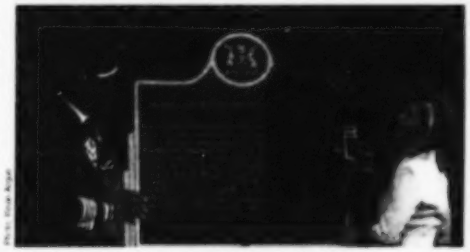
Although a plaque in itself does not confer provincial designation, plaques clearly promote awareness and understanding of our unique heritage. In 2002, for example, the Port Burwell Marine Museum Committee approached the Trust to commemorate the Port Burwell Lighthouse – the oldest wooden lighthouse on the Canadian shore of Lake Erie. This plaque tells the story of a distinctive lighthouse and helps visitors to understand its important role in Great Lakes navigation. In addition, it complements the historical interpretation of the local Port Burwell Marine Museum.

Plaques also interpret our past and help shape our future. For instance, the Trust worked with the Lincoln and Welland Regiment and the Lincoln and Welland Regiment Foundation to unveil a plaque honouring Victoria Cross recipient Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall. In 1919, Lyall was given this award – the Commonwealth's highest military decoration – for his actions in the First World War. In 2005, Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex and the Trust's Chairman, The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, unveiled the plaque in St. Catharines. The plaque was installed in a memorial garden near the Regiment's armoury and serves to inspire all Canadians, but especially young soldiers serving in today's armed forces.

Also in 2005, the Trust worked with the Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives to recognize the C. Beck Manufacturing Company – a lumbering and wood product manufacturing company that operated from 1875 to 1969 with its centre of operations in Penetanguishene. The company was supported by an extensive array of lumber camps, specialty mills, general stores and factories in the Georgian Bay area and Toronto. The museum is located in one of the original general stores. The plaque, which was installed in front of the museum, interprets the company's place in Ontario's history while helping to promote the museum's important work.

The Trust works with many communities and dedicated individuals to commemorate and interpret Ontario's past. But, for many, plaques are just a starting point for further learning and exploration, and a greater understanding of our collective role as heritage stewards.

Wayne Kelly is the Public Education and Community Development Manager for the Ontario Heritage Trust. Beth Anne Mendes is the Trust's Plaque Program Coordinator.



In 2005, Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex and the Trust's Chairman, The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, unveiled the plaque to Lyall in St. Catharines.

Provincial plaque facts:

- Annual deadline for applications to the Provincial Plaque Program: September 15
- Nearly 1,200 plaques have been erected since 1956
- 130 are located in Northern Ontario
- 45 celebrate women's history
- 36 are dedicated to Franco-Ontarian culture
- 59 commemorate First Nations heritage
- 21 are international (located in France, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Scotland, the United Kingdom and the United States)

For more information about the Provincial Plaque Program, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca or e-mail plaques@heritagetrust.on.ca.

RUSH AND REMEMBRANCE

By Romas Bubelis

On a windswept summer day in 2005, a small congregation gathered beside a cloverleaf off-ramp at the western fringe of Toronto. In Richview-Willow Grove Cemetery, amid the high-pitched whine of speeding cars and merging semi-trailers, they hold a memorial service commemorating Etobicoke's founding families.

Richview Cemetery officially opened in 1853 to serve a small rural community located in what is now central Etobicoke. The site's chapel, the Richview Methodist Church, was still active in 1959 when the confluence of the Macdonald Cartier Freeway (the 401) and Highway 427 was developed on a colossal scale. The chapel was demolished and the congregation relocated. But at the community's request, the traffic engineers' high-speed ramps avoided the cemetery. This remaining land – girdled and rendered villageless for real estate development – was disturbed no further.

In the 1970s, two other local historic cemeteries, Willow Grove Burying Ground and the McFarlane family cemetery, were closed and relocated to make way for development. Their occupants, numbering about 110, were removed and re-interred alongside Richview Cemetery, between the concrete ramparts. And so it was that the graves of many of Etobicoke Township's founding families found an unexpected resting place in Richview-Willow Grove Cemetery in the middle of a busy highway cloverleaf.

As memories fade, or, did the markers of the pioneer families, each marker subject to its own natural process of deterioration and decay. What remained was a variety of block, slab and obelisk style monuments at various angles of repose and in various conditions. Those carved from limestone and marble showed the most wear, interestingly being made of sedimentary and metamorphic rock that was itself created by a process of decline and transformation.

Into the midst of this cycle stepped the Etobicoke Historical Society and Etobicoke Heritage Foundation. These groups count among their membership a number of descendants of those interred at Richview-Willow Grove Cemetery. They raised $20,000 in funding for conservation of the monuments and these funds were matched by the Ontario Heritage Foundation Community Challenge Fund. Broken stones were repaired with stainless steel pins, cracks were grouted and the markers set on new slab footings. The thin, white marble slabs with carved scrollwork and inscriptions stand upright once again, as did the pioneers in their day.

At Richview, conservation techniques were used to slow the inevitable cycle of deterioration. The markers of a distant point in time have been preserved for a time longer. The pioneers hold their ground, remembered by their descendants even as the world rushes by around them.

Romas Bubelis is an architect with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Cemeteries are a great place to begin your genealogical research. Many cemetery offices have searchable records, databases and other times when the general public can access these records. There are also many good online resources. For more information, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca.

Initial results from the Ontario Heritage Trust's Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program (NSLASP) have been released. On June 12, 2006 the approval of 19 applications was announced by The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Trust; David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources and Caroline Di Cocco, Minister of Culture.

The approved applications for funding to acquire significant natural heritage properties in southern Ontario were submitted by a range of conservation partners – including the Bruce Trail Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada and several conservation authorities and private land trusts. Over 1,000 hectares (approximately 2,500 acres) of provincially significant natural heritage lands will be protected across southern Ontario through these projects. The total property value of the proposed land acquisitions is $3.4 million, with half to be funded from the program and half to be matched by the partners.

NSLASP focuses on the protection of significant components of natural heritage systems in Southern Ontario, the completion or connection of key trails, source water protection, habitat for species at risk, increased ecological representation in provincial parks and protected areas and large woodlands or wetlands and associated connecting linkages. The program supports land protection and the creation of stewardship plans and appropriate stewardship projects on the newly acquired lands.

These are exciting times for the Trust as we work with the Ministry of Natural Resources and a number of conservation partners to help conserve our natural heritage for future generations and to help protect and enhance the province's diversity of plants and animals. We look forward to a second round of applications!

Tony Buszynski is the Acting Team Leader for Natural Heritage and Coordinator of the Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program for the Ontario Heritage Trust.

NEW BOARD APPOINTMENT

The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Trust, is pleased to announce the appointment of William W. Buchanan of Toronto to the Board of Directors. Mr. Buchanan is a Chartered Accountant whose community work has included volunteering and fundraising for a number of social service, arts and theatre organizations.

"I'LL USE MY FREEDOM WELL"

By Steven Cook

A world-class exhibit honouring a Canadian of national historic significance was launched this spring at the internationally renowned Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site in Dresden. The launch of this exhibit coincided with the site's season opening on May 20.

Entitled "I'll use my freedom well," the new exhibit features artifacts, vivid imagery and interpretive panels to take a fresh look at the life of Josiah Henson. Recognized internationally for his contribution to the abolition movement, Josiah Henson asserted his leadership as an author, a preacher and a conductor on the Underground Railroad. Through his leadership, one of Canada's first industrial schools – the British American Institute – was founded. The Dawn Community developed around the Institute. Henson worked with energy and vision to improve life for the Black community in Upper Canada (now Ontario).

To the schooner captain that had provided him and his family with safe passage across the Niagara River, Josiah Henson promised, "I'll use my freedom well." Prophetic words from a man of action. Henson indeed used his freedom well. He set about finding food and lodging for his young family – no easy task for a man who had arrived on the Canadian shore with nothing but a determined spirit.

In time, he would come to southwestern Ontario and convince other settlers to buy into his vision of a trade school, one of the first of its kind, around which would develop a strong, educated and self-reliant community. The British American Institute and Dawn Settlement were the result of this dream. He served as the spiritual head of this community and went overseas on several occasions to promote the work of the Institute and spread the word that Canada, his newly adopted home, was a place of refuge from slavery. Although married early in life, he helped to defend this country as captain of a Black militia group stationed at Fort Malden during the Rebellion of 1837.

And then he went back – back to the southern United States, taking the Underground Railroad in reverse. He risked everything – his years of work, his freedom, his life – to bring others north from bondage.

This hand-carved wooden chair (detail) is part of the "I'll use my freedom well" exhibit.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony opened the new exhibit at Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site. From left: Ruth Dudley, Ontario Heritage Trust board member; Councillor Bill Weaver, Municipality of Chatham-Kent; The Honourable Caroline Di Cocco, Ontario Minister of Culture; Marie Van Bommel, MPP Lambton-Kent-Middlesex; and Ben Shipley, MP Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Josiah Henson would eventually lead over 118 enslaved persons north – to a life without the sting of the overseer's whip, to a land of new opportunity, to freedom.

Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site.

Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site, an Ontario Heritage Trust property, is open to the public from May 20 to October 28. School and group bookings of 20 people or more can be arranged year-round by calling the site directly at 519-683-2976.

Photo: Wavor Photography

Photo: Wavor Photography

Uncle Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site are more artifacts from Henson's time.

Steven Cook is the Site Manager at Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site.

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

THE PAST UNVEILED

By Beth Anne Mendes

This fall, the Trust will unveil and install four provincial plaques that commemorate an impressive and varied collection of subjects.

The French Presence in Hearst

On September 14, the Trust will celebrate the contributions of Franco-Ontarians in the Town of Hearst. Since the first French settlers arrived in Hearst in 1912, the Franco-Ontarian presence has grown from a minority to about 90 per cent of the total population. Franco-Ontarian life in Hearst is characterized by factors affecting the French-speaking population throughout Northern Ontario – geographic isolation, dependence upon natural resources, importance of the forest industry and the desire to preserve Franco-Ontarian heritage. These factors have been fundamental to the experiences of Franco-Ontarians in Hearst and the development of that community. Today, francophones play a leading role in a wide variety of commercial and cultural activities that reflect Hearst's strong and vibrant Franco-Ontarian heritage.

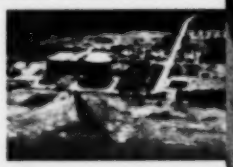
Photo courtesy of Marielle Lachaussee

The Red Brick School

In the village of Elgin, in Rideau Lakes Township – situated between Perth and Gananoque – the Trust will unveil a plaque with the Elgin and Area Heritage Society on September 16. This plaque commemorates School Section No. 5 – a late-Victorian one-storey, two-room brick schoolhouse from 1887. Although schools like SS No. 5 may be seen elsewhere in Ontario, this schoolhouse is provincially significant as an early example of important 19th-century provincial initiatives to improve the quality of school design and therefore the educational experience in Ontario. This school, and others like it, replaced smaller log-and-frame structures and was part of an effort by provincial and municipal authorities to ensure Ontario's socio-economic future by fostering education in rural areas.

Douglas Point Nuclear Station

Also in September, the Trust and the Canadian Nuclear Society will unveil a provincial plaque on the shores of Lake Huron to commemorate the historical and technological significance of the Douglas Point Nuclear Station. This facility, which operated from 1968 to 1984, was the prototype commercial-scale CANDU nuclear power plant. Its significance lies in the genesis of Ontario's and Canada's large-scale nuclear powered electricity generating program.



The Honourable Pauline McGibbon

Mark October 5 in your calendars as the Trust and the Sarnia Kiwanis Foundation celebrate the life and work of one of Ontario's most remarkable women – The Honourable Pauline McGibbon. A pioneer of the women's movement at a time when the worlds of business and politics were dominated by men, McGibbon made history when she was appointed as the Queen's representative in Ontario – the first woman to assume the position of Lieutenant-Governor in the province, the country and the Commonwealth.

Ms. McGibbon's life was defined by her lifelong commitment to volunteerism and a concern for others less fortunate than herself. She was a strong advocate of the arts, good government and the importance of vibrant communities. It is fitting that the plaque to honour Pauline McGibbon will be located in McGibbon Park in Sarnia, once the schoolyard of Lochiel Street School (1916), which she attended as a student, just two blocks from her family home.

Pauline McGibbon, 17 September 1984, Companion of the Order of Canada. © Library and Archives Canada. Reproduced with the permission of Library and Archives Canada. Credit: Harry Palmer/Harry Palmer collection /PA-182386.

Beth Anne Mendes is the Ontario Heritage Trust's Plaque Program Coordinator.

OUR PORCELAIN PAST

By Pam Brooks

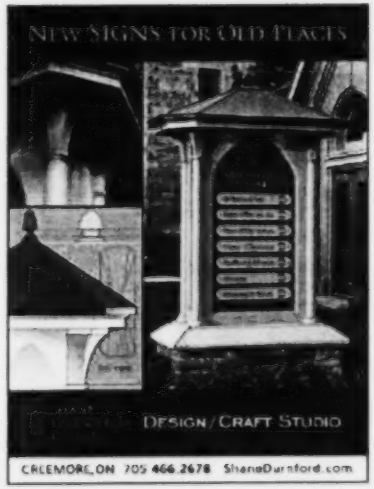
Fulford Place in Brockville was the residence of Senator George T. Fulford – an important businessman, politician and philanthropist. When completed in 1901, the house and grounds provided an expansive and gracious setting for entertaining. Fulford's wealth and status was reflected in his home. Today, the rooms on the main level remain virtually the same as they did when Fulford and his wife Mary lived in the house prior to his death in 1905.

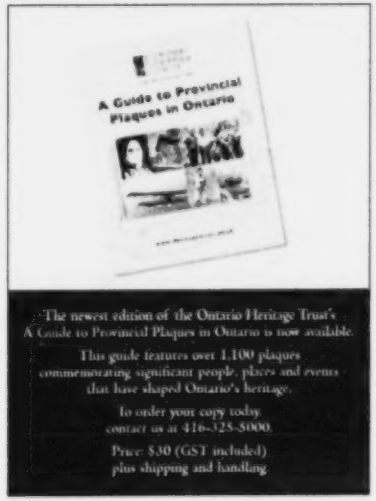
The drawing room, decorated in the Rococo Revival style, was furnished with pieces purchased during the Fulfords' overseas trips or acquired from well-known firms. The importance of the surviving interior furnishings is one of the reasons Fulford Place was designated a National Historic Site.

The porcelain vases, displayed in the drawing room, are examples of this impressive collection. The large green vases are over two feet tall and sit on a metal base with a brass ormolu (gilt bronze) rim and arms. White reserve panels on the front and back of each vase are elaborately hand-painted. Similar bouquets of flowers in vibrant hues of orange, pink, yellow, lavender and purple decorate one side of each vase. On the other side are lavish landscape scenes. The vases, which may be Sèvres, have been dated to c. 1900.

These vases – and many other fine ceramics – are on display at Fulford Place. For more information on the site and its hours of operation, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca or call 613-498-3003.

Pam Brooks is the Ontario Heritage Trust's Coordinator for Eastern Ontario Sites and works at Fulford Place.

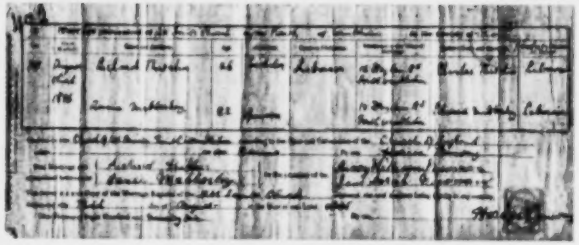



A Guide to Provincial Plaques in Ontario
The newest edition of the Ontario Heritage Trust's A Guide to Provincial Plaques in Ontario is now available.
This guide features over 1,100 plaques commemorating significant people, places and events that have shaped Ontario's heritage.
To order your copy today, contact us at 416-325-5000.
Price: $30 (GST included) plus shipping and handling

Digging in the archives

By Gordon Pim

Photo: Gordon Pim



Genealogical research can be challenging, frustrating and ultimately rewarding as you wade through hundreds of records and personal artifacts. If you have reached an impasse with your data or need to find a clear way of sorting your records, follow these basic steps to embark on your genealogical adventure.

Begin with what you already know. Plot your family tree on a sheet of paper – beginning with yourself and working backwards through as many generations as possible. Don't worry if there are gaps or unknown data; you can fill that in later. Add birth, marriage and death dates for each person. If in doubt, ask a parent or grandparent. Also, search through your own personal archives. Open the old shoeboxes and unlatch the trunks in the attic and sift through their contents carefully. You will be surprised at what amazing treasures you have in your possession. They may only have value to you or your immediate family, but each artifact adds clarity and richness to your past.

Now you can begin solving some of the mysteries these records present. Delve into the vast assortment of genealogical documentation available to you. A good place to start for your ancestry in this province is the Archives of Ontario (www.archives.gov.on.ca). The Archives of Ontario holds a vast treasury of family history records – from birth/marriage/death and cartographic records, to reference texts and directories, to wills and legal documents. Visit their website for preliminary research and then make an appointment to go to their Toronto offices and search through the microfilms. (The Archives will also loan microfilms to other public libraries across Ontario but not to individuals directly.)

Another valuable cache of records about family members can be found in Ontario censuses. Some census documents are more complete than others; they are sometimes frustrating and genealogists must be aware of their limitations. Census takers often took guesses at, or made assumptions about, who lived somewhere. They might also ask about a neighbour who was not at home during a census visit. Consequently, information can be incorrect or completely absent. Handwriting of census takers, too, can be challenging to decipher and transcriptions of these records sometimes contain errors because of handwriting confusion. Despite these limitations, census records remain important documents for family history research. Again, these records can be accessed, among other resource centres, through the Archives of Ontario.

It should come as no surprise that once you begin asking questions about your genealogy, a number of new questions arise. Once you have begun researching your family's fascinating past, you will need to discover more. Fortunately, there are many options. Join your local branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society (visit www.ogs.on.ca). Conduct online research through thousands of websites, newsgroups and web forums. Purchase a genealogy software application to help you store and sort your data.

Genealogy can be a rich and rewarding pastime. Fortunately, thanks to the resources available, you will quickly be rewarded for your efforts. And your family's contributions to the growth and development of communities in Ontario will become apparent.

Gordon Pim is a Marketing and Communications Coordinator with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Visit the Ontario Heritage Trust's website (www.heritagetrust.on.ca) and follow the basic steps offered there to get a good start at organising your data and conducting some basic family history research. We hope you find this website a useful starting point for the world of genealogical research that awaits you.

The information provided by the Ontario Heritage Trust is for basic information and guidance only. The Trust does not provide genealogical research services or possess archival records for research purposes.

Keeping a paper trail – How to preserve your paper artifacts

By Simonette Seon-Milette

Books, cards, certificates, letters, diaries, manuscripts, maps, paper currency, newspapers, deeds, paintings and photographic prints ranging from the late 1700s to the late 1900s all have something in common. They are all paper-based documents and can be found in the Ontario Heritage Trust's cultural collection. These artifacts have documented our world, inspired and captured our creativity and cemented our desire to maintain their preservation.

To ensure that valuable paper artifacts are well preserved, it is helpful to understand that there are two basic threats to the survival of paper-based documents – unstable environmental conditions and improper handling. Fortunately, these threats are both controllable.

The use of poor-quality materials and the paper-making process used by some manufacturers can contribute to a higher level of acidity, a less than ideal condition for paper documents. The ideal temperature for paper-based artifacts is between 18 and 20 degrees Celsius, with little or no temperature fluctuations recommended. Any temperature change should be gradual. Elevated temperatures coupled with high humidity can cause chemical reactions to take place in the paper, causing discolouration and embrittlement.

The relative humidity should be no higher than 60 per cent and should not fluctuate rapidly. In cases where the temperature and relative humidity are both high, these two factors create the ideal setting for the growth of mould and mildew. The recommended relative humidity for paper is below 50 per cent – with photographic material even less, at 45 per cent.

Paper documents are extremely sensitive to natural and artificial light. As a result, paper will discolour and pigments and dyes will fade. The use of ultraviolet filters will reduce the amount of harmful ultraviolet light. Limiting the exposure time of paper artifacts on display will extend the life of those artifacts.

Poor handling of paper documents can also result in tears and creases, stains, folds and abrasions. A few simple measures will help preserve them. The use of cotton gloves when handling paper documents will protect them from finger oils. They must also be supported by a stiff acid-free cardboard backing slightly larger than the document. This will provide the appropriate support when handling the document. Overcrowding of documents in boxes can also place considerable stress on paper. Acid-free folders and boxes are a wise alternative to storing paper documents in cardboard boxes. Acid-free tissue should be used to interleave between paper artifacts. Before storing paper documents, metal fasteners such as staples and paper clips should be carefully removed. Acidic cardboard and/or backing boards should also be removed. This may be difficult depending on how the backing is attached to the paper; you may need to seek the services of a qualified conservator. Newspapers should be stored separate from other documents as they tend to be extremely acidic.

With careful attention to storage environments, your paper artifacts will be heirlooms you can pass on to future generations. Similarly, the conservation and protection of the Trust's artifacts ensure that these treasures remain in their best possible condition for generations to come.

Simonette Seon-Milette is the Cultural Collections Coordinator at the Ontario Heritage Trust.

The Ashbridge collection held by the Trust includes these diaries. Artifacts like these are carefully preserved under archival conditions.

Uncovering family history

By Dena Doroszenko

Built in Perth in 1823, Inge-Va represents one of the finest Neo-Classical Georgian houses in Eastern Ontario. In its refined, park-like setting, the house also embodies many of the triumphs and tragedies that constituted life during the 19th century. Often, archaeologists have little more than statistics to help glimpse the past. By using a combination of available historical documentation about the family, oral history and the archaeological record, we have pieced together a fascinating history of the life course of one family that occupied this picturesque home.

Inge-Va was built in 1823 for Reverend Michael Harris as his first home in Perth. Harris built a second house called "The Grange" and moved his family there in late 1832 or 1833, at which time Thomas Mabon Radenhurst moved into Inge-Va. Radenhurst, the "Father and Champion of Reform" in Lanark County, was widely known in the small community of Perth. A Reformer and a friend of Robert Baldwin, Radenhurst was also an adversary of two other Perth lawyers, James Boulton and Daniel McMartin.

After his death in 1854, Radenhurst's widow and children continued to live in the house. Over the next 20 years, many deaths associated with disease occurred within the household. Fanny contracted typhoid fever in December 1866, dying a few days later. Charles succumbed in 1869 to tuberculosis. His two elder sisters, Mary and Edith, also suffered from tuberculosis. Both girls died in April 1873 within days of each other. The apparent mass disposal of household contents in the Inge-Va privy – which was archaeologically investigated in 1988 – has been interpreted partly as a reaction to this series of deaths. The fear of contamination within the household led to the disposal of items that were thought to be communal and used by the infected individuals within the house.

Over 15,000 artifacts were recovered from this site – and more are being uncovered today. Mending of the ceramic sherds has resulted in a minimum vessel count of 369 vessels that include sets of china and toiletry wares. There was also a large quantity of glass objects within the deposit, numbering 313 vessels. Members of the Radenhurst family lived in the house into the 1890s, at which time Ella Inderwick and her family moved in. It was Ella who named the house "Inge-Va" – a Tamil word meaning "come here."

When the Inderwick family moved to Inge-Va in 1894, it was generally believed that the house was infected with tuberculosis since the Radenhursts had the disease. One family story tells of Dr. Beeman visiting the house soon after the family had moved there and upon seeing young Cyril playing on the floor, demanded to know how Ella had cleaned the floorboards. Since she had only scrubbed them with soap and water, he insisted that she paint them as well to eliminate the germs in the cracks. This precaution is unusual since nobody with tuberculosis had lived in the house for 21 years!

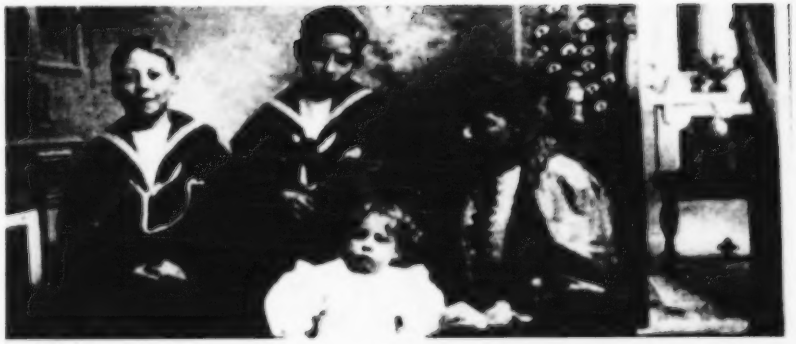
The 1993 archaeological season discovered the original summer kitchen inside the current one. The original 1823 summer kitchen was much smaller than the one you see today. The original west wall can be seen inside the current building. It appears that while Lucy Radenhurst was staying with relatives in Toronto in the early 1840s, the kitchen was renovated.

Child's mug with the name of Charles. Charles Radenhurst died of tuberculosis at Inge-Va in 1869.

Since 1992, Algonquin College's Heritage Masonry program has worked with the Trust to rebuild a tall stone boundary wall along one side of the property. In 2002 and 2005, during excavation of the trench to lay the new stone wall, hundreds of artifacts were recovered. These artifacts included intact medicine bottles and ceramic sherds. This material dates to the Radenhurst occupation of the property and reflects the disposal of refuse during the 19th century.

Taken together – the historical facts about the Radenhurst family, the discoveries through archaeology and the oral history associated with Inge-Va – we have a glimpse of life in Perth's past as experienced by one family through time.

Dena Doroszenko is the archaeologist for the Ontario Heritage Trust.



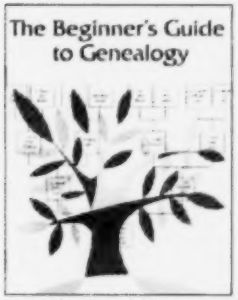
The Inderwick family.

Even as recent as June 2006, Trust archaeologists were uncovering artifacts at Inge-Va.

Archaeology projects on Trust properties have been conducted since 1970. The Trust's archaeological collections now include:

- 67 collections
- over 600 boxes of artifacts
- over 600,000 artifacts
- archaeological investigations at Inge-Va in 1967, 1988, 1989, 1992, 2002 and 2005 have resulted in a total of 48,285 artifacts recovered
- archaeological activity at Inge-Va in the summer of 2006 continues to uncover more evidence of the history of this intriguing site

. . . the shelf



THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GENEALOGY, BY FRASER DUNFORD

The Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS), Toronto. Designed for the beginner, this guide describes what you need to know to get started in this fascinating hobby.

The book contains three fundamentals: *How to do the basics* shows you how to go about generating the genealogy of your family ... a straightforward overview from family trees to vital statistics ... *Where to find it* points you to the locations of a number of essential sources, such as maps, censuses and religious, immigration and land records. *An orderly process* helps you tie the first two parts together. *The next steps* are items not covered in this book but which you will soon need to study – among them, computer programs, numbering systems and copyright.

Dr. Fraser Dunford, a Professional Engineer and former academic, is the Executive Director of the OGS. He is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists. His previous books include *Places of Worship in Peterborough County* and *Municipal Records in Ontario*. He is most interested in Peterborough County, Ontario, where he grew up and where his family has been since Europeans first settled the area.

For a copy, contact the OGS at www.ogs.on.ca or 416-489-0734.

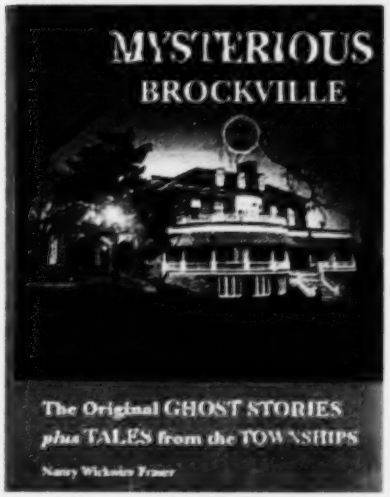
MYSTERIOUS BROCKVILLE 2, BY NANCY WICKWIRE FRASER (2006)

Henderson Printing, Inc., Brockville. Brockville has its share of supernatural beings. *Mysterious Brockville* – the first book – grew out of the Friends of Fulford Place Association's popular Ghost Walks. It describes the visits of some of these disincarnate entities to area residents. Some area history also provides the background for each story.

The Ghost Walks, initiated in 1997, were inspired by similar entertainments in Perth, Kingston and Toronto, themselves modeled on the famous ghost tours of London, England. Like these haunted walks, the Brockville tours – and the book – weave together ghost stories, historical anecdotes and chilling legends.

With few exceptions, these tales describe phenomena experienced by more than one person, or by a person and an animal, thus eliminating illness or over-medication as sources of the eerie visitations. Personal experiences and street addresses are published with permission.

Mysterious Brockville 2 chronicles original ghost stories plus tales from the townships. In this book, you will encounter the Voices of the Dead, the Phantom Invasion of 1915 and The Library Poltergeist. Curl up with the lights down low – and be sufficiently spooked!



. . . at the gallery

Fulford Place in Brockville is pleased to announce an exhibit by local artist Laurie Sponagle, **Conversations with Time: Fulford Chairs** continues through December 15, 2006. Each of the 10 charcoal drawings depicts a unique chair from the museum's collection. The choice of chair and period room portrayed alludes to a different person who lived, worked or visited this Edwardian mansion. In conjunction with the exhibition, five chairs that inspired the artist will be on display in the second-floor hallway – an area originally utilized as the Fulford family's picture gallery.

Fulford Place – a National Historic Site – is owned and operated by the Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the Government of Ontario, dedicated to identifying, preserving, protecting and promoting Ontario's heritage. For more information about Fulford Place and other Trust activities, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca or call 416-325-5000.

SAVING THE SPENCERVILLE MILL – PRESERVING COMMUNITY HERITAGE

BY LOUISE BURCHELL

Parading into the Spencerville Mill grounds is the Glengarry Pipe Band. Photo: The Spencerville Mill Foundation

The Spencerville Mill, a fine cut-stone flour and grist mill, is located on the bank of the South Nation River in the small rural village of Spencerville (population approximately 300), located off Highway 416 south of Ottawa.

In 1878, the *Canadian Illustrated News* described the mill as "producing as fine a grist and flour as any country mill in Canada." Built by Mercy and Robert Fairbairn, the mill had been operating since 1864. A fire gutted the mill in 1884 and it took a couple years to rebuild the structure within the remaining stone walls. Soon afterwards, it was sold to Thomas Bennett, who installed a single roller mill in an attempt to meet the demand for more refined, white flour. J.F. Barnard, a newcomer to the village, took over the mill in 1903 and replaced the millstones with up-to-date milling machinery. He developed "Grow or Bust" feeds, which became the first registered trademark in Canada for a line of balanced feeds for poultry and livestock.

In 1934, the overshot waterwheel was replaced with a rebuilt "Canadian" turbine that is being restored for demonstration purposes. In the early 1930s, the mill was a bustling centre of activity. Feeds, grains, seed and farm-related goods were sold to local farmers and dealers throughout southeastern Ontario. But, in 1972, after three generations, the Barnard family closed the mill.

For several years, the mill sat neglected and the elements took their toll. In 1980, a small group of local residents formed a committee to save the mill. In the late 1990s, with the help of the South Nation Conservation Authority and generous donations from three local families, the dam was rebuilt, the mill's stone and timbers stabilized and a new roof installed – thereby preserving the last standing mill on the South Nation River.

The Spencerville Mill Foundation, a volunteer organization, now owns and operates the historic mill. With the assistance of some grants and the help of numerous volunteers, restoration work continues and new programs are being developed to make the mill a heritage and cultural centre for visitors and local residents. Volunteer and student tour guides welcome visitors to the mill. A summer heritage camp is a fun-filled week of history for area children. Self-guided walking tours highlight historic buildings in the village. Local artists, musicians and artisans are showcased at the Spencerville Mill through art and musical events. A park behind the mill makes a peaceful spot for a quiet break or a family gathering. In addition, the mill pond is a favourite place to launch canoes for a leisurely paddle.

Almost 150 years since the Spencerville Mill began operations, it is being restored and revitalized as a centre of community activity. The Spencerville Mill is once again becoming as fine a country mill as any in Canada and a symbol of our agricultural heritage. Villagers are justifiably proud of the Spencerville Mill.

For hours of operation, special events and more information, visit www.spencervillemill.com.

Louise Burchell is a member of the Education Committee with the Spencerville Mill Foundation.

GUEST COLUMNIST

Come out to Doors Open Ontario events this fall!

The Doors Open Ontario 2006 season is in full swing, with many events still to come in September and October. Take this opportunity to explore communities across the province and discover their hidden heritage treasures.

For more information, visit www.doorsopenontario.on.ca.

The Ontario Heritage Trust is your organization for the preservation of Ontario's heritage. By making a planned gift to the Trust, you can ensure that our heritage is conserved for the enjoyment, education and well-being of present and future generations.

A planned gift is a donation to be realized in the future. Planned gifts are a source of income that will help the Trust to continue its important work.

Call 416-325-5025 today for a confidential discussion with our Manager of Fundraising and Development or e-mail us at generalinquiries@heritagetrust.on.ca to receive information by mail.

Our young people are the heritage champions of the future

The Young Heritage Leaders program celebrates the significant voluntary contributions of young people to the preservation, protection and promotion of cultural, natural and built heritage. For more information on how to nominate an outstanding Young Heritage Leader in your community, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca or e-mail
for an application. The deadline for this year's nominations is December 22, 2006.